

CENTER for
DEMOCRACY
and CITIZENSHIP

209 Page Street West
St. Paul, MN 55107

www.augsburg.edu/democracy

January 26, 2012

Timothy Eatman, Syracuse University

Dear Tim,

In view of your outstanding leadership in public engagement, we invite you to join the Council of the American Commonwealth Partnership, the principle strategy and implementation group for ACP, consisting of key colleagues and partners whose expertise and talents will become invaluable assets as we move forward. Membership in the Council will involve participation in one or more of the working groups described below, and members will be identified on the ACP web site, DemocracyU.

The White House convening on January 10, "For Democracy's Future: Education Reclaims Our Civic Mission," officially launched the American Commonwealth Partnership (ACP), a broad alliance of higher education, P-12 schools and educational groups, and others dedicated to deepening the civic identity of educational institutions – promoting "democracy colleges for the 21st century," to use a term out of land grant and community college histories, across the whole landscape of education. The White House launch marks the beginning of a new stage for our movement, especially for colleges and universities, by moving toward a pervasive commitment to education as a public good. This is facilitated by a significant new emphasis in the Department of Education on strengthening civic learning and democratic engagement, described in the [remarks](#) on January 10 by Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. See also the [report](#) on ACP's DemocracyU web site.

Over the coming months, ACP will promote several initiatives supported by working groups within the Council. These include, but will not be limited to:

The ACP Policy Initiative, building on policy discussions with the Department of Education over the last six months, will focus especially but not only on state-level policies that strengthen engagement.

The Deliberative Dialogue Initiative, in partnership with the National Issues Forums Institute, is a campaign being organized on higher education's roles in America's collective future. It will spark conversations in hundreds, perhaps thousands, of communities and campuses this Spring, and if resources become available it will be complemented by a communications effort to convey higher education's public roles, now largely unknown by the general public, according to [research](#) conducted through the National Issues Forums Institute.

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Student Organizing Initiative is a campaign taking shape to deepen the civic identity of college students, spread skills of deliberative public work, and strengthen DemocracyU and its social media campaign as resources for students to share their stories and address their concerns for our democracy.

ADP Campus Civic Health Initiative, coordinated by the American Democracy Project in partnership with the National Conference on Citizenship, will develop ways to assess the impact of colleges and universities on community and campus civic health.

Pedagogies of Empowerment and Engagement Initiative, an organizing effort spearheaded by Blase Scarnati of Northern Arizona University, will identify and collect the details of effective pedagogies of empowerment and engagement across the country and recruit new sites and partners.

Civic Science Initiative is organized by John Spencer at the at the University of Iowa, Scott Peters at Cornell, Molly Jahn at the University of Wisconsin, Rom Coles at Northern Arizona University, and Harry Boyte at Augsburg College and the Humphrey School. Civic science is a framework for understanding scientists as citizens, working with other citizens in ways that deepen collective wisdom on public questions and that develop civic agency. A report on civic science at the Delta Center is [here](#).

Public Scholarship Initiative organized by Tim Eatman of Imagining America at Syracuse University and John Saltmarsh of NERCHE (UMASS Boston) will develop strategies for cross-sectoral, inter-association/institution collaboration around policies that galvanize recognition and reward of publicly engaged scholarship (PES). Priorities include finding ways to strengthen incentives for respectful alliances with community-based organizations and activate an alliance of early career scholars.

Citizen Alum Initiative, directed by Julie Ellison, is forming an independent organizing committee. Citizen Alum is an effort to change the framework of alumni relations, partnering with alumni as "doers" as well as "donors." Citizen Alum aims to find the hidden treasure--the creative, civic, intellectual, and social capital of alumni, especially recent "gap alums" and alums who opt out of conventional roles, supporting them as contributors to their home communities and as allies in education.

Augsburg College is serving as the inaugural host institution for the American Commonwealth Partnership. A Presidents' Council, co-chaired by Nancy Cantor (Chancellor of Syracuse University) and Brian Murphy (President of De Anza College), will advise. The Center for Democracy and Citizenship at Augsburg College will play a coordinating role.

A priority is development work, raising funds to support a flexible, modest but effective infrastructure for the initiatives, their working groups, and ACP overall. If you are able and interested in helping create a working group on development, please let us know.

We invite you to indicate your interest in one or more the above efforts, or indicate if you are involved already in the Citizen Alum Initiative. We are excited to be at this threshold, and deeply appreciate the energy and creativity which has launched ACP. We look forward to joining with you in the work ahead.

Sincerely,


Harry Q. Boyte, Coordinator, American Commonwealth Partnership